



PANHANDLE

BENEWAH, BONNER, BOUNDARY, KOOTENAI, & SHOSHONE COUNTIES

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

The Panhandle's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose from 8.1 percent in March to 8.5 percent in April as spring break-up kept loggers from working and retailers did not hire quite as many people as they normally do in the spring. Job losses in *Mining, Manufacturing*, tourism, and Coldwater Creek's warehouse in the Sandpoint area since April 2001 continued to hold down retail and service spending.

Despite the continued drag on the economy, there are several signs that the Panhandle is emerging from the downturn. The unemployment rate in April 2002 was two-tenths of a percentage point lower than in April 2001, as shown in Panhandle Table 1. Although job openings remain low relative to recent years, they are starting to rise toward normal levels. The many business openings and expansions described in this article express optimism about the prospects for the Panhandle's economy. This spring, temporary employment agencies began seeing surges in requests for temporary employees from manufacturers and other businesses. Generally, when an economy is emerging from a recession and orders for products start picking up, businesses are reluctant to make permanent hires until they are convinced that orders will remain high. Therefore, temporary employment tends to grow rapidly during the early stages of a recovery.

Even when a recovery is underway, there generally are job losses in some sectors. The Harpers office furniture plant in Post Falls laid off 118 employees in late May for an indefinite period. Office furniture sales were hit hard by the economic downturn. In addition to fewer offices being built and furnished, furniture manufacturers are competing against a surplus of used furniture from offices that closed during the downturn. Even after the lay-off, Harpers remains the Panhandle's largest manufacturing plant, currently employing 432 people.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Benewah County

- Liz Martin and Jessica Wilson opened The Pet Patch in early May in St.

Panhandle Table 1: Labor Force & Employment

	April 2002*	March 2001	April 2001	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	92,230	92,340	87,960	-0.1	4.9
Unemployed	7,830	7,490	7,620	4.5	2.8
% of Labor Force Unemployed	8.5	8.1	8.7		
Total Employment	84,400	84,850	80,340	-0.5	5.1
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	91,840	91,390	87,650	0.5	4.8
Unemployed	9,050	9,860	8,870	-8.2	2.0
% of Labor Force Unemployed	9.9	10.8	10.1		
Total Employment	82,790	81,530	78,780	1.5	5.1
JOB BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	66,930	65,660	65,680	1.9	1.9
Goods-Producing Industries	12,740	12,620	13,170	1.0	-3.3
Mining	540	540	820	0.0	-34.1
Construction	4,140	3,880	4,250	6.7	-2.6
Manufacturing	8,060	8,200	8,100	-1.7	-0.5
Lumber & Wood Products	3,650	3,780	3,510	-3.4	4.0
All Other Manufacturing	4,410	4,420	4,590	-0.2	-3.9
Service-Producing Industries	54,190	53,040	52,510	2.2	3.2
Transportation	1,350	1,300	1,310	3.8	3.1
Communication & Utilities	1,080	1,080	1,060	0.0	1.9
Wholesale Trade	2,160	2,160	2,150	0.0	0.5
Retail Trade	14,200	13,860	14,500	2.5	-2.1
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	2,720	2,680	2,640	1.5	3.0
Service & Miscellaneous	18,060	17,350	16,490	4.1	9.5
Government Administration	9,070	8,950	8,780	1.3	3.3
Government Education	5,550	5,660	5,580	-1.9	-0.5

* Preliminary estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

Maries. The pet store sells chinchillas, birds, chameleons, geckos, iguanas, turtles, sugar glider squirrels, fish, and other pets. It also offers a wide variety of pet supplies.

Bonner County

- By moving from Baldy Industrial Park in Sandpoint to the old Pend Oreille Brewery building on Cedar Street in June, Pend Oreille Winery doubled its space and improved its exposure to tourists and other shoppers. With the expansion, which gives the winery a larger wine-tasting room and a larger gift shop, four new employees were hired. It now employs nine people. Pend Oreille Winery, established seven years ago, offers nine varieties of wine made from grapes grown in Washington and California.

Kootenai County

- Silverwood Theme Park near Athol will open a 12-acre water park in June 2003. The water park will feature rivers for rafting, wave pools, water slides, a sunken bar, sandy beaches, and special areas for young children. Currently, the average visit to Silverwood is about nine hours. The water park will turn the average visit into a two-day event. Silverwood hosts about 340,000 visitors between the beginning of May and the end of Sep-

tember. This year, Silverwood added a magic show, a climbing wall, and a magic shop. It also will hold a rodeo in August. During the last few years, Silverwood's reputation as the largest theme park in the Northwest has increasingly attracted Seattle area residents. This summer, Silverwood employs about 500 people.

- Triple Play, the entertainment complex that opened two years ago at 175 West Orchard Avenue in Hayden, is in the middle of a \$500,000 expansion. The new area, called Rumble Cove, will include an 18-hole miniature golf course with a 30-foot volcano and several rivers, a 5,500-square-foot bumper boat pond featuring a sunken pirate ship and water cannons, and a 30-foot-wide track with 14 go-carts on 2½ acres west of the Triple Play building along Highway 95. When the expansion is completed in late June, Triple Play will hire about a dozen people, bringing its summer employment up to 35 people. Prior to the expansion, Triple Play's busiest season has been winter when it employs about 30 people. The 72,000-square-foot Triple Play building offers miniature golf, bowling, laser tag, and rock climbing.
- Mike Marquardt opened FT11 Interactive in Coeur d'Alene on April 1. The multimedia company develops cutting-edge Web sites tailored to the particular needs of companies throughout the United States. The FT11 building at 1712 Sherman Avenue also houses Marquardt's business telephone systems company, Firsttel.com.
- Bayview recently celebrated the opening of the Dromore Manor, a bed and breakfast in a pink Victorian-style house overlooking Lake Pend Oreille. The B & B also boasts a brook flowing into a trout pond
- Rathdrum's newest businesses are devoted to beauty and fitness. One of Rathdrum's newest businesses is Salon 41, a hair and nail salon in Lakeland Square along Highway 41. Another new Rathdrum beauty salon is Adorable You at 662 West Commercial Park Avenue, which includes a tanning center, a juice bar, a wellness center, and massage services. Adorable You also sells weight loss products, jewelry, swimwear, and other apparel. The Lakeland Shopping Center is home to All in One Fitness & Spa, a 2,500-square-foot facility offering cardiovascular exercise equipment, weight-lifting equipment, personal trainers, and instruction in yoga and Tai Chi.
- New businesses in Hayden include Prestige Living, a 10,000-square-foot assisted living care center overlooking a golf course at 11950 Thames Court; Nothing But Herbs, a store selling herb plants and dried herbs at 300 East Wyoming Avenue; and Odyssey Sports, selling, renting, and servicing golf carts at the intersection of Highway 95 and Hayden Avenue.
- Joining the business line-up in downtown Coeur d'Alene are Mosgrove Pottery & Architectural Ceramics, a pottery studio and gallery at 211 Coeur d'Alene Avenue; Connoisseur's Catering, a catering business in the old Rustler's Roost building at 9th and Sherman; International Realty Plus, a realty company with up to 15 agents at 311 Sherman Avenue; Marketplace Gifts, a

store featuring cabin-themed gifts, regional foods, home decorations, and garden accessories that moved into the former Hidden Cottage space in The Resort Plaza Shops; Kenzi, a 600-square-foot store at 413 Sherman Avenue selling silver and gold rings jewelry and Nomination-brand charm bracelets; and the headquarters of Adamco, a small grocery chain, which recently moved into 101 East Lakeside.

- Other new businesses in Coeur d'Alene include AquaMed Hydrotherapy Massage Center at 1410 Lincoln Way; City Looks Hair Design at 50 East Neider Avenue; and Your Daily Fix, an espresso stand at the corner of Government Way and Seale Avenue.
- Post Falls welcomed several new businesses during the last two months. One such business is A Touch Above, a massage therapy center at 2700 East Seltice Way. Panhandler Pies & Bakery, a restaurant offering 21 kinds of pies, recently opened at 306 North Spokane Street. Designer I Hair Fashions, a new hair salon at 700 North Spokane Street, offers manicures, pedicures, massages, and tanning beds. It also includes a laundromat and an espresso counter. Blend Espresso Music and Video recently opened at 203 East Seltice Way. The coffee shop offers live music on the weekends and also sells new and used books, videos, CDs, and DVDs. Gerania Briseno and her son Ruben Briseno, who own the three Toro Viejo sit-down restaurants in Kootenai County, recently opened a fast-food Mexican restaurant called Toro Viejo Express in the retail mall across Cecil Road from Wal-Mart in Post Falls. Reebok recently reopened its store selling shoes and clothing for sports enthusiasts in the Prime Outlets.

Shoshone County

- Tele-Serving Innovation (TSI), which opened a call center in Smelterville last year, recently added 24 call stations there. It now employs about 86 people.
- TESH, a nonprofit organization that teaches work skills to Panhandle residents with disabilities, recently opened an 800-square-foot thrift store next to Radio Shack at the Cameron Mall in Kellogg. The store will give TESH clients opportunities to learn retail skills, including stocking shelves, waiting on customers, and cashiering. TESH plans to expand the store over time to give more clients real work experience that will open other doors for them in the community. Workers at TESH's employment-training workshop in Kellogg are helping to collect donations and prepare them for sale in the store. A Second Time Around is open Tuesday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. TESH's offices in Coeur d'Alene and in Kellogg accept donations for the thrift store. Thrift store revenues will be used to help provide training to Shoshone County residents with disabilities.

Kathryn Tacke, Regional Labor Economist
1221 W. Ironwood Drive, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814
(208) 769-1558 ext. 340
E-mail: ktacke@labor.state.id.us